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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-fifth year

Identical letters dated 29 December 2010 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On the Eve of the New Year, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, continues to be extremely grave owing to the illegal, destructive and provocative policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power. In this regard, I must draw your attention specifically to the ongoing acts of violence and terror being perpetrated against the Palestinian civilian population by Israeli settlers, illegally transferred to the Occupied Territory and clearly constituting part of the occupying force, in order to advance its attempts to illegally de facto annex more Palestinian land.

The most recent illegal activities are the confiscation by violent settlers from the illegal settlement of "Keda" of 100 dunums of land in the Palestinian village of Jaloud, south-east of Nablus. The village of Jaloud is also facing additional aggression related to the latest work by the settlers on illegal new construction expanding the settlement of "Shavot Rahel" built illegally on Jaloud's lands. On 26 December 2010, an additional illegal and provocative act of aggression was committed by armed Israeli settlers from the illegal settlement of "Yair" confiscating 1,500 dunums of privately owned Palestinian land in Yatta village near the city of Al-Khalil (Hebron). Similar to previous such terror attacks and illegal confiscation of Palestinian lands in the region of Bethlehem and Nablus, this rampage was perpetrated under the protection of the Israeli occupying forces, who only intervened to guarantee the safe return of the assailants to their illegal settlements.

As well as the intensification of other illegal measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the situation is most severe in areas in and around Occupied East Jerusalem, where Israel, the occupying Power, continues to carry out illegal activities and measures, particularly settlement activities, for the direct purpose of altering the demographic composition, character and legal status of the city, including by de-populating the city of its Palestinian inhabitants through forced evictions, home demolitions, revocation of residency rights and other measures in flagrant violation of international law, including in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, and of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

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In this regard, it is imperative to note that the escalation of settlers' violence and aggression is occurring simultaneously with the extremists policies and positions adopted by the Israeli Government and especially the latest provocative statement by Avigdor Lieberman, the Foreign Minister of Israel, in which he excluded the possible achievement of peace. This is an alarming, condemnable and irresponsible position that represents a real threat to the international and regional efforts in seeking a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

We must also draw your attention to the fact that while we commemorate the second anniversary of the brutal Israeli war of aggression against the Gaza Strip, Israel, the occupying Power, not only continues to impose its illegal and inhumane siege on 1.5 million Palestinians, living in severe conditions in the Gaza Strip, in grave breach of international humanitarian law, but also escalates its military aggression against Palestinian civilians in Gaza, which resulted in several deaths and injuries. Indeed, it is clear that the escalation by Israel, the occupying Power, of violent acts and measures against the Gaza Strip is, inter alia, intended to divert the international community's attention from its ongoing theft and colonization of Palestinian land in the West Bank, particularly in East Jerusalem, aimed at distracting attention from this core issue obstructing the peace process and at diluting the clearly intensifying global pressure on Israel to cease its illegal settlement activities, to abide by its legal obligations and to commit to the peace process based on its agreed terms of reference.

This grave situation requires urgent attention and serious action by the international community, including the Security Council in accordance with its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, to reject completely all illegal Israeli actions and to not waver in the demand for a complete cessation of settlement activities and all other illegal Israeli policies and measures that are jeopardizing the situation on the ground and seriously sabotaging the possibility of achieving the two-State solution for peace on the basis of the pre-1967 borders. We are at a critical juncture and must not lose the opportunity before us to move forward to peace based on the firm international consensus that prevails.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 379 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 2 December 2010 (A/ES-10/506-S/2010/612) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations